

Sexual Abuse of Children to Result In Long Prison Sentences

Other defendants face prison time for rape, weapons, and robbery charges

A 35-year-old Dover man faces life in prison for sexually abusing a teenager. Deputy Attorney General Kathleen Dickerson won a conviction in a bench trial against Eric Curry, 35, of Dover. In November 2015, Curry was caught having sexual intercourse with a minor female when the young girl's sister passed by and witnessed the crime. Superior Court Judge Jeffrey Clark convicted Curry of Rape Second Degree and Sexual Abuse by a Person in a Position of Trust or Authority First Degree. Curry faces life in prison on the abuse charge, and 25 years to life for rape. Sentencing is scheduled for February 28, 2017.

A 47-year-old Felton man was sentenced to 79 years in prison for his repeated rape of a young child. Deputy Attorney General Kathleen Dickerson secured the sentence for Vernon Cephas. In early 2015, Cephas was arrested after the mother of a young girl reported the abuse. The child regularly stayed with a relative who lived with Cephas. A Superior Court jury convicted Cephas of four counts of Unlawful Sexual Contact of a Person less than 13 Years of Age, three counts of Rape Second Degree, and one count each of Continuous Sexual Abuse of a Child, and Sexual Solicitation of a Child. Judge Jeffrey Clark sentenced Cephas to 79 years in prison followed by two years of probation.

A 28-year old Wilmington man will spend the next 18 years in prison after being sentenced for gun possession in a local bar. Deputy Attorney General Periann Doko secured the sentence

for Unique Loper. In January 2016, Loper was involved in a fight with several others at Famous Tim's Tavern in Wilmington, and produced a firearm. A shot was fired during the course of the fight. In September, Loper was convicted by a jury of Carrying a Concealed Deadly Weapon, Possession of a Firearm by a Person Prohibited, and Possession of Ammunition by a Person Prohibited. Loper, who still faces additional gun and drug charges he amassed while out on bail, was sentenced as a habitual offender by Superior Court Judge Calvin Scott, Jr. to 18 years in prison, followed by 6 months of either home confinement or work release, then two years of probation.

Deputy Attorney General Phillip Casale secured guilty pleas from two Wilmington men involved in a city shooting earlier this year. Michael Boyd, 25, pled guilty to Possession of a Firearm by a Person Prohibited, and Possession of Ammunition by a Person Prohibited. Keenan Mitchell, 22, pled guilty to Assault First Degree, and two counts of Possession of a Firearm During the Commission of a Felony. In March 2016, Mitchell was armed and initiated an argument with Boyd in the 600 block of Jefferson Street in Wilmington. During the course of the argument Boyd retrieved a firearm from his girlfriend and the pair exchanged gunfire. Boyd's girlfriend was struck in the arm as a result. Superior Court Judge Eric Davis immediately sentenced Boyd to 5 years in prison, followed by 6 months of either home confinement or work release, then 18 months of probation. A presentence investigation was ordered for Mitchell, and he faces a minimum of eight years in prison when sentenced in March 2017.

Deputy Attorney General Mark Denney secured a prison sentence for Jahleel Parker, 22, of Wilmington. In January 2016, Parker and his now-deceased co-defendant, Ira Brown, forcibly entered the home of a known drug dealer in the 900 block of Brown Street, where gunfire was exchanged. Brown was killed, and three people in the house were injured. Parker was convicted of Burglary First Degree, Possession of a Firearm by a Person

Prohibited, and Assault Second Degree, in addition to violating his probation on a prior drug dealing conviction, and recently sentenced by Superior Court Richard Cooch to 10 years in prison, followed by 6 months of either home confinement or work release, then 2 years of probation.

Deputy Attorney General Barzilai Axelrod secured a prison sentence for Isaiah Taylor, 27, of Newark for the armed robbery of the Smoke Shop in the 1700 block of Kirkwood Highway in Elsmere. In February 2016, Taylor, while wearing a disguise, pointed a gun at the store clerk, took money from the cash register and then attempted to lock the victim in a back office. State Police reviewed video surveillance from nearby areas and executed a search warrant at Taylor's home. During their search, Troopers identified proceeds from the robbery. Superior Court Judge Charles Butler sentenced Taylor on charges of Robbery First Degree and Kidnapping Second Degree to six years in prison, followed by 6 months of either home confinement or work release, then 2 years of probation.